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AN ADDRESS,

&c. &c.

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sh. 1831.

ADDRESS

TO

THE MISGUIDED POOR

OF THE

DISTURBED DISTRICTS

THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE BURGES,

VICAR OF HALVERGATE AND OF MOULTON, IN NORFOLK.

"A wise Man feareth, and departeth from evil." — **HOLY BIBLE.**

L O N D O N :

RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD :

SOLD BY

MATCHETT AND CO. NORWICH ;

DEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE ; AND SLOMAN, YARMOUTH.

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1830.

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SLOMAN, Printer, King-Street, Carmarthen.

AN ADDRESS,

&c. &c.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-SUBJECTS,

At a time of great danger to yourselves and to society at large, I come forward to address you. In the spirit of kindness I offer you such advice as I think may be useful, and in a like spirit let me beg of you to receive it. Much harm has been already done: much may yet be in contemplation. Pause, I beseech you, in this career of madness and folly. Consult your reason, deliberate with your consciences, and consider the effects of disorderly conduct before consideration comes too late.

The great point, I take for granted, which the well-disposed among you wish to carry,

is to better your condition as poor men. You are forbidden by no law of God or man to do this. He who can soberly and honestly advance himself in life is to be commended ; for as this can only be done by sober and industrious habits, society has as much cause to rejoice in the increase of your comforts, derived from such a source, as you have yourselves.

But the means you have unfortunately been persuaded to take for the accomplishment of these ends, surely no one can approve of. They are not such as you would yourselves approve of, if placed in the situation of those you are injuring. For the destruction of property, attended, as it commonly is, with riot and rapine, can only end in ruin to all parties. It is like cutting away the anchor of the ship in which we are all embarked, and letting her drive before the wind. It is shaking the pillars of a massy building, and overwhelming friend and foe in the same destruction.

I will not suffer myself to think that you are the persons most guilty in the riots and depredations hitherto committed. Still less will I believe that you are partakers in those

dreadful acts of incendiaryism by which the country, night after night, has been and still is alarmed. Advice would be of little avail if you were ; for hardened guilt, which feels no shame, is touched by no remorse, and hearkens to no reason, generally continues bold, and bad, and desperate to the last.— Nothing, as daily experience testifies, can put a stop to a life of determined wickedness but a vile and ignominious death.

You are not, the far greater part of you, men of this abandoned character. I feel persuaded that what you do, you do ignorantly and erroneously. If you were convinced your ends could be better obtained by better means, you would, I am sure, use better means. You only, I trust, want to be recalled to sober and industrious habits. These virtues have not left you. They are merely overcome, for the moment, by strong delusions and temptations. When those are removed, you will return into the quiet paths of industry, sorry that you ever left them.

My belief is, that it is not the distressed poor who are at the bottom of these outrages against good order ; not those who have long been suffering great privations, and who

have the most cause to complain, but they who, having ruined themselves and their families by their own infidel and depraved habits, are now traversing the kingdom in every direction, (and, I doubt; under secret influence elsewhere), endeavouring to corrupt others, and to set servants and labourers against their employers, until the denunciation is but too prophetically fulfilling, that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

These are the adversaries we have most cause to be alarmed at, who, paying no regard to religion, and destitute of all principle, first cruelly neglect their own families, and then are reckless what harm they do to the community.

Be not drawn away by such evil advisers. Men who "have no fear of God before their eyes," will endeavour to drive out all fear of God from others, and consequently all belief in Him. But how can they do this, so long as you have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand? Look up to the heavens and there you contemplate "the *glory* of God." Look down upon earth and there you behold the *works* of God. Look upon the dry and dead grain, when you throw it



into the ground, and when it springs up again into a living harvest, and there you see, at once, the *goodness* of God, and a proof that he will raise *you* up also from the dust after you are dead, and buried, and forgotten. Trust me, no man can take away our belief in a God, before he deprives us of the evidence of our senses.

How such wretchedly depraved beings have become so abandoned, and so numerous among us of late years, it makes no part of my present address to inquire. There are wheels within wheels, and a little time will probably discover where the real seat of all this insubordination lies.

In the mean while it may be permitted me to remark, that when we consider the numerous bad tracts that are every where daily thrown upon society, all encouraging those who were otherwise disposed to be obedient to sedition and disloyalty, to immorality and irreligion, we cannot be surprised to find that they have had their pernicious effect in the demoralization of a large portion of the community. Such dreadful causes have as naturally produced such dreadful consequences as our fields produce a crop answerable

to the seed we sow in them. No kingdom has been found proof against immoral publications. They corrupt as they go, until society, from "the crown of the head to the sole of the foot," is become one large "putrefying sore," and the father's vices the betrayers of his children's innocence. We have, with our eyes open, permitted these publications to infest the land, and we are now paying the price for it.

One grand point with these men is to set you against the NOBILITY, CLERGY, and GENTRY, together with the GOVERNMENT of the realm. Be not so deceived as to look upon your warmest friends as your bitterest enemies. Believe me, no description of men are better disposed towards the sober and industrious poor, (whether they be manufacturers, mechanics, or labourers) than those whom you are thus taught to think evil of. Surely, if it be truth you seek, it is not very difficult to rid yourselves of this delusion. No one can tell you that the sun is not a blessing to the earth. No one can make you believe, that the warmth of that sun does not cherish and bring to maturity the fruits of the earth. If any man were to set about

endeavouring to convince you to the contrary, you would very properly laugh him and his arguments to scorn.

" And with quite as much reason may you despise the designs of those, who would persuade you that the higher classes of society are your enemies. Look at our *schools* for *national education*; at our *public charities* for the relief of "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." See how they spread themselves over every part of the empire; how they open wide their doors to ignorance and distress of every description; how they turn none away whom they can by any possibility accommodate; and how they are daily enlarging themselves that they may be able to accommodate all. Does this look as if the higher ranks of society were the poor man's enemy?

Consider again the *subscriptions* poured forth, in countless abundance, by not only the higher, but by every competent class of society, for the relief of both domestic and foreign calamities, as well as for more casual misfortunes. Where has the hand been shut that ought to have been open? Where has the heart been cold that ought to glow with

benevolence? There is no country in the world where there is so little excuse for riot and depredation as our own, because there is no country in the world where the poor, in age and sickness, in distress and tribulation, are so kindly thought of, or so bountifully relieved. Every man who has visited foreign parts knows this to be true. He knows that he can find no home abroad equal to the home he leaves behind; and there are few who have been obliged to depart, but would be happy, were it possible, to return again to their beloved country.

Nor must you believe, as these ill-affected persons would have you, that GOVERNMENT has been turning a deaf ear to your complaints. Government will do every thing that can be done for the distresses of the poor. But no government can do more than its means of doing permit. You are aware how, every day, people are obliged to leave their native land. This is not the work of our rulers, but the will of Providence. Over the population of a country government can have little or no control. Where this population is too numerous for the land, (as it has long been among us), distress, and very

great distress must follow; and, lest it should increase to a fatal extent, emigration must be both permitted and encouraged. Give this argument its due weight before you are deluded to think hardly of government, or to turn your arms against society and the laws of your country.

And the opposing interests of the various classes and grand divisions of society render the acting for the best, on the part of government, still more difficult. Agriculture, as the sheet anchor of the state, requires, perhaps, the first care. But our commerce and manufactures are also important objects of the national concern. If government seems to legislate for the more peculiar advantage of any one of these branches, it is instantly followed by the discontent of the other branches. What, in such a case, can government do but impartially view these contending interests, and give the turn of the scale to whichever branch may most need it, at any peculiar period, and under any peculiar circumstances. Believe me, government, at all times, cannot do otherwise than consult the general interest. Whatever be the existing administration, whatever its particular views or prin-



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the great body of the clergy in every diocese for that especial purpose.

Your present resentment, however, seems to be levelled more particularly against the PROPERTY and MACHINERY of the FARMER and MANUFACTURER. Remember, you cannot hurt one description of men, without directly or indirectly bringing the hurt home to all. The farmer may be said to be the great, moving power of society. It goes well with nobody if it goes ill with him. But it must go ill with him indeed, if the fruits of his labours are to be made the foundation of his misery ; if the abundance which, through Providence, his care, and skill, and industry have given to the country, is to be destroyed by the weakness and wickedness of those whose families are maintained out of his purse and property. For the poor are supported, in their need, by the poor's rates, and these, you know, are principally paid by the farmer.

Yes, you will say, but this support is very insufficient ? It is so.—The poor's rates, enormous as they are become, are still very inadequate to the comfortable maintenance

of the distressed part of the community. Consider, however, that population has been every where alarmingly increasing, without the means of support increasing in any proportionate measure. Consider, further, whether you yourselves—I am anxious to speak with all kindness, but I must not stifle the truth—whether you yourselves do not diminish the good effects of this public provision for your relief. I wish it were possible to obtain a correct account of the sum total, on the one side, of the amount of the annual earnings of the poor, and on the other, of the annual expenditure out of these earnings (in manufacturing districts in particular) at the different sinks and sot-houses of the kingdom. This would shew that, however low your wages have been of late years, and totally inadequate to the support of your families, you have yet, in many instances, rendered them much less efficacious by this improvident and unjustifiable application of them. And you must know, that every shilling of a poor man's wages, spent at a public-house, is an additional shilling taken out of his employer's pocket. That this can only be the case with the immoral part of the poor we are aware; but

that does not make any difference as to the ruinous effect of such a conduct, upon such a mode of subsistence, when we consider how this description of poor seems to be every where increasing upon us.

As to the machinery of varions descriptions, which, for some time past, you have been in the habit of destroying, it must be allowed that, both in agriculture and in manufacures, it has contributed very materially to contract the sources of employment. So long as the poor can be found in work, and paid properly for it, machinery may be used, but I think no longer. Where employment for a poor man stops, there machinery ought to stop. If he lie idle while the machine goes on, it is worked to the detriment of every part of society. Labour, of some sort, must be found, and wages must be paid; and, when this is the case, machinery of any sort and to any extent may be used, and with benefit to all parties.

Still, even as things are, much may be said in defence of machinery, and against this unlawful and wicked destruction of it. It goes against our human nature to forego those advantages which human ingenuity has supplied us with. If the farmer or manu-

facturer can get the same work done for one pound which formerly cost him five, he is, like the rest of the world; too much alive to his own interest not to embrace the opportunity. If he can get the same corn, or article of commerce, ready for market, upon a favourable occasion, in two or three days, which, some years back, would have cost him so many weeks, will he suffer that favourable occasion to be lost by letting his machinery lie idle? I really see not how we can, any of us, make his case our own, and say that we would not act in the same manner.

In fact, we do act in the same manner.— Consider, every class in society abridges labour and increases profit as far as may be. Every trade, calling, and profession use the advantages which modern improvements in science place within their reach, to diminish their toil and to enlarge their gains. All are, and have been doing this for years, and whether with, or without decreasing the usual sources of labour, has not, perhaps, been materially adverted to. *Every man for himself, and God for us all*, is indeed but a lean, scurvy sort of morality ; yet remember, if it has been the farmer's maxim, it has no

less been the leading rule of conscience with his neighbours in general. And where population is, at all points, rapidly increasing, and the maintenance of the poor every day becoming a heavier burden, and this burden falling almost exclusively upon the landed interest, surely such a trying state of things should be some apology for the farmer's conduct, and should lead us to conclude that, with such increased expences, instruments for abridging labour would be very naturally resorted to. I say not this in defence of machinery while the poor are starving, God forbid! but merely to shew, that neither farmer nor manufacturer is altogether so blameable in the use of it as you may have been led to imagine, and that, at any rate, you can never for one moment be justified in this general destruction of it.

I will go a step further—I will ask whether you yourselves have not been guilty of something approaching, in some measure, to this same sort of offence which you are now so severely visiting upon others? For have not many instances occurred among the more disorderly labourers and artisans, of abridging their toil where the opportunity offered,

working only one half of the week and riotously spending a large portion of what they have earned the other? This, I am sure, has often been the case in large manufacturing towns, such as Sheffield, Birmingham, &c. when business has flourished and wages run high, and would, I fear, obtain more generally were the same facilities offered for it. Now where, in this case, is the difference, I beseech you, between you and your employers? They abridge labour that they may more benefit themselves and the community at large. You abridge labour to your own loss and discredit, and to the benefit of no virtuous part of the community whatever.

I come to the last, and assuredly by far the worst head of lawless depredation, *viz.*—That SPIRIT of INCENDIARISM by which the fruits of the earth have been devoted to destruction. I say not, I believe not that this deed of deep offence rests upon your consciences. No; you as much, probably, detest this villainy as we do. But give me leave to observe, that all riotous proceedings, all disorderly conduct on your part, all abuse of your employers, all evil-speaking against

your superiors, before you know whether they deserve to be so spoken against, is an encouragement to these acts of the incendiary; and that you do thereby, in fact, aid and abet, though you do not actually mix with, nor even so much as know any thing about them. He who tells me that such and such men are rascals, and points the common indignation against them, does as good as tell me that there is no great harm in treating them as rascals; nay, does even require me so to treat them. Words lead to deeds, and bad words generally end in bad deeds, and the worse the word, the worse, for the most part, the deed.

To such as are actually engaged in this diabolical work, as well as to those who may, directly or indirectly assist in it, I must venture a little advice, hopeless as I am that any advice will be of service. Where, however, the line of duty runs broad and imperative before us, "come what come may," we must firmly travel upon it, and speak of men and things as we find them.

Whoever you may be, or wherever you may spring from, or by whatever secret influence you may have been persuaded to

commit a crime of such enormity, believe me, you are laying up a sorrow in store for yourselves ; a countless sorrow, that shall last you your lives, and go down with you to your graves. If you, any of you, belong to the labouring classes, (which, I repeat, I cannot bring myself to think), and seek for revenge against the farmer, you may, indeed, easily find it. His property lies open to you by night and by day, and by night or by day you may, if you please, do him terrible injury. But remember, it will be a no less terrible injury to yourselves. If you demolish, with the machinery of man, the blessings of God ; if you doom the harvest of the year to destruction, and the farmer to poverty, and the community to a grievous loss, it will be necessary to consider the nature of your crime. You might join yourselves to highwaymen and house-breakers, with less harm to society, and less sin upon your conscience, than to the incendiary.—They revenge themselves on those alone to whom they are strangers, whom they know not, nor have ever received a kindness from ; but you, more brutal, more desperately lost to all feeling, revenge yourselves upon your

benefactors, and by destroying the farmer's property, or inciting others to destroy it, cruelly snatch the nourishment from the mouths of your own parents, your own wives, your own children ; the pensioners of heaven itself, the aged, the infirm, the fatherless, and the widow.

Consider, further, the difference between your conduct and theirs. The house-breaker hazards his life, like a knowing man, for something ; but you, like men that know nothing, for no one advantage whatever. How, or in what way, can it help you, or these incendiaries themselves, to break the machines, demolish the factories, burn the stacks, or destroy the property of other men ? It is all sheer loss to all parties, and such as no party in these distressing times can bear, especially where the fruits of the earth are sacrilegiously consumed. For we are never sure that a future harvest will make up these present losses. And indeed, it may well comport with the goodness of that Providence, " who giveth us all things richly to enjoy," for a conduct thus desperately wicked to take all things away. I am sure God would be justified, even in the opinion of those who rarely

worship Him, in withholding those gifts which we thus under-value, and in sending a *real famine* where men are become so hardened in guilt as to destroy the very "staff of life," and to make that want among human beings, which the Almighty, in his mercy, has not made.

Nothing can recompence society for losses of this nature, because nothing can return into its bosom that is thus consumed, until God is pleased, by new suns and showers, to ripen the earth into new harvests. The destruction, night after night, of the "bread of heaven," when man and beast retire to rest, and all things are wrapt in silence and darkness, is more the act of a devil than of a human being, and is as much without remedy as it is without parallel.

What the country thinks of these base incendiaries you all know; and you know that speedy and exemplary punishment will follow upon their detection. These wretches you see, are not content with punishing man, but they have even the dreadful audacity to lift up their hands against God. For this refinement upon common villainy, this guilt doubled and trebled upon the soul, we are

indebted, in a great measure, to the writings of our *Cobbets* and *Carliles*; and every farmer or manufacturer who encourages such publications, and imbibes such sentiments, must not be surprised that these deeds of darkness should be thus fearfully brought home to them. "Teach your children to read, (said that arch incendiary of the nation) and I will teach them to think." How far he has redeemed his pledge, let the prophaneness, disloyalty, burnings, ruin and devastation around us, lamentably testify!

Should the incendiary escape detection and destruction—for like a flash of lightning they come together—Should he escape the thousand perils around him, and live to grow old, the horror of his conscience will be almost an adequate punishment for the iniquity of his conduct. If he has contrived, by great good fortune, to hide himself from man, he is yet sure that the grave itself cannot hide him from God. And what hands can he lift up to heaven, who has dared, while the eye of the Almighty was upon him, most flagitiously to consume the bounty of heaven? He needs no alarm from his fellow-creatures. Every day that he "goeth forth

to his labour," whips and scorpions, the rack, the torture, and the gibbet are before him. Every evening that he retires to rest, the very silence of the night is horrible to him, and the moment he lays his head upon the pillow, he beholds "the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never shall be quenched!"

But why put so impossible a case as to suppose that the incendiary, any more than the murderer, can escape? How should he? All eyes are upon him; all hearts are against him; all tongues proclaim aloud his wickedness and his deserts. He can go no where where he does not hear, and see, and feel an everlasting enemy. If he stop, he stops with terror; if he move, he moves with terror. Rewards are offered for his apprehension and punishments prepared. While the law is striving to lay hold on him, he lives, it is true. But how does he live? In the very midst of "the valley of the shadow of death," trembling in the darkness of the night, yet dreading the approach of day! Who can envy him such an existence as this—an existence more bitter than dissolution itself?

Before I part with such among you as

have been unfortunately deluded to join those who are thus daily injuring every description of their fellow-creatures, let me beg of you seriously to consider, how, without undrawing the dreadful curtain of another world, how, by such conduct, you are likely to fare in this. When you have at length grown thoughtful, and sat down after committing, or lending yourselves to all these enormities, will you find that you are, in any respect, the better for them? Will they have added any thing to your means of comfortable support? Will they have introduced peace and plenty into those cottages which before were cold, and naked, and desolate? Will they more warmly have recommended you to your former employers, or more endeared you with your friends and neighbours?

Alas! you know that no such things will follow. You know, on the contrary, that you will be left without comfort, without support, without friends, without employment, and far more desolate and distressed than you were before. Every hardship and misery you complained of, you will find you have increased. You will find that by thus "lifting up your hands against every man," you have compelled every man "to lift up

his hand against you." Surely this is a state too serious not to alarm you, and far too dangerous not to induce you, in your cooler moments, to take the earliest opportunity of escaping from.

O, then, be persuaded to repent before repentance is of no avail, before you have gone so far as to make it necessary for the law to take its course; that law, which ever has been, and ever will be, too strong for all the wickedness arrayed against it. Come out from among those desperate men who are bent upon their own destruction, and who are endeavouring to involve you in the same guilt and ruin. Think of yourselves; of your families; of your fellow-creatures; and—if your deluded minds can yet bear the sound of so solemn a word—think of Almighty God! If you regard yourselves, you will return every man to his home, and wait with patience until the regulations of government, and the efforts of the magistracy, open unto you better prospects. If you have any thought for your families, you will not, by exposing yourselves to an untimely death, bring additional poverty, and sorrow, and misery upon them. If you consider your

fellow-creatures, you will refrain from injuring them any further, knowing that you have already injured them but too much. And, finally, if for one single moment, you remember Almighty God, and his denunciations against sin, you will tremble for what may befall you hereafter, compared with which every thing that you suffer here is as nothing!

I have done with the incendiary, and with the misguided and deluded poor. I will, in conclusion, address myself to those among you who have, as yet, *not been moved to do what is wrong* by their employers.

You are at present "innocent of this great offence." For God's sake continue so. Let no bad advice move you against the peace or property of those, with whom, as artisans, or servants, or labourers you are connected. Tell me not of bad masters. No man is a bad master to a good servant. A good servant, as times go, is far too valuable to be treated with unkindness. It is for their mutual advantage—and they perfectly know it—to behave well to each other. There is hardly any attachment more sincere, more calculated to endure wind and weather, than that which is founded on length of service.

The master and the servant's heart, having gone through the rough ways of life together, become known to each other. The one has been turned to mercy, the other to faithfulness, and let the world, in its contending interests, go right, or let it go wrong, depend upon it nothing of importance will ever go wrong between them.

But, say you, there are farmers that are very hard with their labourers and dependents. I fear there are—I fear that neither farmers, nor manufacturers, nor any description of persons, do, at all times, consult the comfort of those employed about them so much as, in either pity or policy, they ought. Believe me, it is not the conduct of such task-masters that I would, for a moment, advocate. If they be unjust to their labourers, their tradesmen, and all who come within the range of their dealings, they deserve no defence. They must die as they have lived; despised, disliked, defrauded, forsaken, but never forgotten.

Still, let me be permitted to hope that such masters are not numerous; and it is highly criminal in you to visit upon the whole body of farmers or manufacturers, the

offences of a comparatively very small number of them. Would you think it fair that we should punish the virtuous poor, because there happens to be some among them that are not virtuous? Should we have the heart to do it ourselves? Then why is it done to others?

We must, in all cases, carefully separate between the evil and the good. God will do so at the last day, and we must do so now. But God will do more. He will be merciful to every man's sins to the very utmost. And, remember, we are called upon to follow this example too. Is it not clear from hence, that even those among your employers, whose conduct is really and seriously objectionable, should yet not be visited with too severe a condemnation? For they may be, and very frequently are, excellent fathers and husbands; highly useful and capable men in their stations, and deserving of other person's esteem, though unfortunately they have failed in gaining yours. At all events, the disorderly part of the poor will do wrong, (and you will do equally wrong to encourage them in it) if they pursue alike to their hurt the virtuous and the vicious; the master with whom all

his labourers are contented and comfortable, and he who contents and comforts none of them. There, is perhaps, some extenuation of human conduct in avenging ourselves on our oppressors ; but what pardon can he hope for, who has secretly injured those who never injured him ?

The course to be pursued by you who have, as yet, avoided joining yourselves to these riotous proceedings, is plain : You are commanded in the book of God—and all commands from that quarter are of the most awful cast—not “to follow a multitude to do evil.” If it be evil, you must avoid it. Though all the world should turn with it, you must turn from it. You must stand by your employers now, and they will stand by you when you most need it, in sickness and old age. You must consider those masters as your best friends who have given you constant employment. Constant employment is a poor man’s riches. It keeps him whole in heart, and out of the way of dangerous temptations. Where there is no casting off of old servants, there is no lack of goodness on the master’s part. He is thus kind to you because he knows your

worth, and you are thus faithful to him because you know his. Continue to let him trust you for your honesty, and depend upon it you may trust him for its reward.

The honest labourer and mechanic are, indeed, our pride and our security. Distressed yet patient, they become high characters in society: They can never be slighted nor forgotten. The opportunity will be watched for serving them. Every eye will be upon them for good. Every heart will be open to them. And if to this they add fidelity to their employers; if they contentedly "go forth to their work, and to their labour, until the evening," and return and suffer in silence, the probability is, that they will not be permitted to suffer long.

I do not, I confess, admire those men who are for making their market by the distresses of society; and, that they may make the best market of it, craftily do all in their power to add to these distresses. You will, I hope, see your true interest in a very different point of view. You will not suffer these troublesome times to pass without making your market of them too. But you will make it by honesty and obedience; by a mind sted-

fastly fixed upon what is right and good, without being "weary of well doing." You will pity those among your employers, whom you see exposed to losses which they have not deserved. You will remember the kindness they have shewn to you at the different periods of your servitude, and not suffer all the past benefits they have conferred upon you to pass away like the morning cloud. Every thing, in short, in an unsettled and awful state like the present, will be gained by fidelity, and every thing will be lost by the want of it. Now therefore is the time for trial, and now too is the time for triumph with the good and virtuous poor.—Let them rise up as one man, and give "all the heart, and all their soul, and all their mind, and all their strength" to their masters ; and those masters, they may rest assured, will be bound in good will to them for ever.

Having thus briefly told you what I think your duty is towards us at this eventful period, it is but fair, before I finish these remarks, that, (addressing myself here to others, rather than to you) I should give you some notion what I think our duty towards you should be. I have ever, both in such

tracts as I have laid before the public, and, I trust, in the general course of my conduct through life, been friendly to the wants of the poor. I have ever thought their comforts fell short of their deserts ; and if I have lifted up my voice in their favour, when times were better with them, I will not forbear to advocate their just and righteous cause now that they are so much worse.

We are told in the Bible—that holy book, which men scorn while they live, and put under their pillow at the approach of death—and we are told it with a solemnity calculated to make an impression upon every heart, that “the rich and poor meet together;” and that “the Lord is the maker of them both.” He is so—and he intended that they should meet together, in such a manner as mutually to aid and assist each other. He intended that they should both live; that, with a marked difference indeed in their circumstances, they should both enjoy the fruits of their industry.

Change may come—rebellion, revolution may come; but it will make no difference with the mass of mankind. Their doom is fixed, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou

eat bread, till thou return unto the earth." God hath said it, and man, by no regulations of wisdom or government, can reverse it. They who fall under this doom now may hereafter rise up in the scale of society—they who are high in that scale at present, may, in process of time, be low, and lost, and destitute enough. Every revolving age will behold a different set of poor; but whatever they are that are destined to be at the bottom of the wheel, "God hath set them their bounds that they cannot pass."

At the same time, it is seriously to be considered, that though man be doomed to labour, he must at all times, in all places, among all persons, under all forms of government, be able *to get his bread by labour.* He must not feel that his utmost exertions procure him not due nourishment wherewith to support labour. He must not see that a scanty maintenance from the parish is all that his family have to expect, in addition to the small pittance of his earnings. Such a state of things must go near either to break his heart, or corrupt it.

It is not to be endured that they who do every thing for us, should have, as to the

remuneration for their industry, so little done for them. Let those who look cold upon the wants of the poor consider what, from the expulsion of Adam out of paradise down to the present moment, have been the exertions of the poor. When we behold our fields standing thick with harvests—our cities shining in splendour—our useful works of art—our canals, bridges, roads—our temples, theatres, palaces—our markets, bringing the fruits of the earth home to our very doors—our commerce, manufactures, elegances, luxuries—all the great stamina and necessaries of life, which require the strong arm of cultivation hour by hour, and day by day—When, I say, we look abroad and behold all these blessings spread around us—when we knock at our hearts within and confess the value of them all, we know, under Providence, to whom we are indebted for them.—We know that it is the poor man's toil, the poor man's industry, the poor man's patient abiding at his work, from morning to evening; that feeds, and nourishes, and adorns society; that it is his humble virtue which, in the midst of poverty and want at home, procures us this abundance and luxury abroad.

Shall we then be content to see them destitute? Shall we bear to know, that the promoters of our earthly comfort are without every earthly comfort themselves? When God declared that "the poor shall never cease from out the land," he plainly decreed that they should, as a collective body, from age, to age, for ever remain poor. It was an act of strong necessity, of large wisdom, of deep, and dark, and awful goodness. But when he added, "therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land," he as evidently intended that they should be comfortable; that they should be adequately paid for their labour; that their families should have the proper support of human beings; and that the hand of charity should be secretly extended where the hand of public provision could not reach.

And this solemn injunction of Almighty God, will and must be obeyed, if the poor behave themselves soberly and orderly. By so behaving they will work with God, and good men in their own favour. They will interest and gain all hearts on their side,



if they do but shew they are deserving of being better thought of. The time is approaching, and, I trust, is fast approaching, when all ranks and degrees, all sects and parties of men will unite in opinion, that, whatever may be left undone, at all events the *condition of the labouring poor must be improved.* There may be disputes about the best and most equitable manner of doing this, but there will be none about the thing itself. For every man is beginning to see those cruel necessities in a proper point of view; and, God be praised, it seems as if every man would rejoice to come forward in the removal of them, so far as under the existing state of things they can be removed.

I could say much on the call upon the CLERGY, on this occasion, to *reduce their tithes*, and on the sad manner in which this call has been enforced. This, however, is neither the time nor the place for it. My wish throughout this address is to aid and conciliate all parties; to oppose and offend none. Still, thus much, I will take the liberty to observe, that as we shall probably soon have ecclesiastical changes of some kind, I hope among these changes to see, not a com-

mutation, (which is but another word for a reduction) but a *regulation of the tithe system*. I hope the legislature will devise some means, by which all tithes in future (vicarial as well as rectorial) shall be paid by the OWNER, and not by the OCCUPIER of the soil. We shall then see an end to all those jealousies and heart-burnings between the clergy and their parishioners, which have been productive of so much mutual ill will; and every farmer will know better what he is about, and will feel much more at his ease when he hires his farm—as for peace and quietness' sake he ought—*free altogether of tithes, great or small.* Whether he or the clergy gain, or lose by such a legislative regulation, ought, I think, never to give them a moment's uneasiness. If the great point be gained, concord between the pastor and his parishioners, every thing, I think, is substantially obtained that can be desired.

Thus far I am a friend, and a most sincere one, to the farmers. But I will venture a step further in their favour, and in that of their landlords. I will ask, with the submission becoming one who is doubtful

from your foes, and not madly direct your resentment against those who are deserving of your gratitude. May the mercy of your fellow-creatures assist you; and may the blessing of God be with you. FAREWELL.

GEORGE BURGES.

HALVERGATE VICARAGE,
December 16, 1830.

THE END.

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